

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4521
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 0472

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IS, RO
SUBJECT: AVINERI VISIT TO ROMANIA

REF: BUCHAREST 366 (NOTAL)

1. IN A DISCUSSION JANUARY 19 SHLOMO AVINERI, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE MFA, DESCRIBED HIS RECENT VISIT TO ROMANIA. THE INFORMATION HE GAVE US PARALLELS THAT CONTAINED IN REFTEL, WITH THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL COMMENTS. HE SAID HIS VISIT HAD CONFIRMED THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES ARE GOOD AND THAT ISRAEL FINDS ROMANIA A USEFUL CHANNEL FOR PASSING INFORMATION TO COUNTRIES WITH WHOM IT DOES NOT HAVE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS.

2. AVINERI, WHO HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY VISITED ROMANIA, SAID HE WAS SURPRISED AT THE EXTENT OF WESTERN INFLUENCE IN ARCHITECTURE, SHOPS, CLOTHING, ETC. HE FELT THIS WAS A VISIBLE EXAMPLE OF ROMANIA'S DESIRE TO DEMONSTRATE ITS "INDEPENDENCE."

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3. FROM A PROFESSIONAL POINT OF VIEW, AVINERI SAID HE WAS IMPRESSED WITH THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, WHICH HE CHARACTERIZED AS "WELL RUN." HE FOUND MINISTRY PERSONNEL WILLING TO LISTEN TO HIS ARGUMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS REGARDING THE MIDDLE EAST. HE FOUND SEVERAL TIMES DURING HIS DISCUSSIONS THAT REFERENCE WOULD BE MADE BY HIS ROMANIAN INTERLOCUTOR TO A POINT HE HAD MADE IN AN EARLIER DISCUSSION WITH A

DIFFERENT OFFICIAL, AND THIS LED HIM TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THE MINISTRY HAD AN EFFICIENT SYSTEM OF CIRCULATING INFORMATION.

4. AVINERI SAID THE ROMANIANS WERE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN HIS COMMENTS ABOUT THE UN AND ITS POSSIBLE ROLE IN A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT, AS COMPARED TO OTHER MULTILATERAL OR INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS. HIS HOSTS BECAME EVEN MORE INTERESTED WHEN HE DESCRIBED THE NECESSITY FOR SUCH INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO BE BASED ON CONSENSUS AND NOT TO BE IMPOSED "BY THE RULE OF TYRANNY." THIS SEEMED TO STRIKE A RESPONSIVE CHORD IN ROMANIAN HEARTS.

5. AS REPORTED IN REFTTEL, AVINERI DISCUSSED JEWISH EMIGRATION ONLY IN GENERAL TERMS. HE ALSO TOLD US, AS HE HAD AMBASSADOR BARNES, THAT IT IS CLEAR THAT ROMANIANS DO NOT LIKE THIS EMIGRATION AND WILL PERMIT WHAT THE ISRAELIS CONSIDER TO BE A MINIMUM ONLY UNDER CONTINUING U.S. PRESSURE.

6. ROMANIAN AMBASSADOR COVACI (WHO DID NOT ACCOMPANY AVINERI) TOLD THE CHARGE' THAT HIS GOVERNMENT THOUGHT THE VISIT HAD GONE WELL. BOTH SIDES HAD BEEN ABLE TO PRESENT THEIR RESPECTIVE POINTS OF VIEW ON THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION; THE ROMANIANS HAD WANTED PARTICULARLY TO GET ACROSS THE POINT THAT SOME ACCOUNT WILL HAVE TO BE TAKEN OF THE PLO BY THE ISRAELIS IF THERE IS TO BE ANY PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE. AT LEAST, COVACI CONCLUDED, AVINERI HAD HEARD THEM OUT.

7. COMMENT: THE ISRAELIS APPARENTLY FIND THAT IT DOES THEM NO HARM TO HELP THE ROMANIANS BURNISH THEIR CREDENTIALS AS CONFIDENTIAL

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A "NEUTRAL" IN MIDDLE EAST MATTERS, AND IT MAY EVEN ANNOY OTHER EAGER ON-LOOKERS LIKE THE SOVIETS AND THE YUGOSLAVS, NOT TO MENTION THE ARABS. MORE SPECIFICALLY, AS LONG AS THERE ARE JEWS IN ROMANIA WHO MIGHT BE BROUGHT HERE, ISRAEL WILL MAINTAIN AS WARM A RELATIONSHIP AS NECESSARY WITH THE GOR.
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